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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

REVIEWED BY  
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( ) DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
( ) SECRETARY  
FOR THE DEPT OF PA EXHIBITORS

Date: March 11, 1962  
Time: 2:00 p.m.  
Place: Hotel Beau Rivege  
Lausanne, Switzerland

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Participants:

United States

The Secretary  
Mr. Foy D. Kohler  
Mr. Martin J. Hillenbrand

Germany

Foreign Minister Schroeder  
State Secretary Carstens

Subject: Berlin

Copies to:

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After lunch the Secretary and Foreign Minister Schroeder resumed their conversation. The Secretary said we were inclined to believe that the Thompson-Gromyko talks have no future and that the possibilities in this forum have been exhausted unless there were to be some change in Soviet policy. Even if there were such a change, it would probably only be reflected at the Foreign Ministers' level or at the Summit. As we analyze the present situation in terms of what the Soviets are saying and doing, the Secretary continued, we conclude that they feel unable either publicly to change their position or to pass to the point of war. Now, then, can we move to reduce tensions and to prevent a crisis? Perhaps some new and additional forum for discussion could be set up, not by all the participants in the disarmament meetings in Geneva but by the Big Four--possibly at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers. The Deputies could gnaw and talk at various aspects of the situation with no sense of hurry, somewhat as in the Austrian

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case. In such a forum, a wide range of subjects could be considered.

As Ambassador Grese has been told, the Secretary observed, we have a stated and long standing national policy on the subject of nuclear non-diffusion. The Soviets have no doubts as to what this policy is. We, however, have no commitment from the Soviets on this subject. We are not of course so much interested in East Germany as in Red China. In this kind of framework we would talk only of transfer to national control, and must obviously protect ourselves against confusing this with the NATO problem. If we did not bring subjects of this sort up in the Deputy Foreign Ministers' forum, then they would have to be discussed in the disarmament context where we would get nothing for them.

Mr Kohler noted that in the discussion which he, Mr. Bohlen and others had had with Dr. Carstens and others prior to lunch (while the Secretary was talking privately to Foreign Minister Schroeder), the subject had been carried somewhat further. He felt that the period which had extended from December 1958 up to the present had now come to an end. Soviet policy, which might be described as one of "Russia first", was affected by the Red China situation, and there was little question but that the Soviet Union was being more decisive in tightening up Eastern Europe. The idea of talking merely for the sake of talking was unacceptable. The possibility of talks focussed only on access had been exhausted in the Thompson Gromyko exchanges. The same point had been made both with respect to nuclear non-diffusion and to a NATO-Warsaw Pact non-aggression agreement, namely, that our best interests would be served in ascertaining whether we could get something for these in the talks which we would have with the Soviets.

Referring to the nine-point paper which the Germans had handed us, Mr. Kohler said it seemed we could accept the German position on talks between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic.

Dr. Carstens said that in the pre-lunch period there had been a long discussion about bringing the two subjects mentioned by Mr. Kohler into talks on Berlin with the Soviets. He had raised two objections: (a) the West did not want to give the Soviets an excuse for violating an arrangement on Berlin, and (b) if Berlin were linked to nuclear non-transfer the Soviets could say they agreed but the commitment must be confined to the two parts of Germany. On the first point Mr. Kohler commented that we thought of any link as working in precisely the opposite direction, that is, giving the Soviets a motive for observing a Berlin arrangement. Dr. Carstens

said he was impressed by this argument. The Secretary noted that the Soviets likewise may be stuck on the subjects of West Berlin and access. They had not picked up the general remarks on broader points which he had made during his talks with Gromyko last fall, and which Ambassador Thompson had made in the Moscow talks. On Dr. Carstens' second objection to linking Berlin to nuclear non-diffusion, the Secretary said we obviously could not accept confining a commitment only to the two parts of Germany since this would be contrary to our own fixed policy.

Foreign Minister Schroeder stated that, as Minister of the Interior, he had favored the idea of a non-aggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty organization in the Federal Defense Council. There were two recognized difficulties: recognition of the GDR and possible slackening of Western efforts to keep up NATO force levels. However, despite these, he favored moving ahead on such a non-aggression agreement. He was sure a formula could be found to avoid the GDR recognition problem. One country could sign for all, or some other arrangement could be worked out. The Secretary suggested that perhaps the Senior Permanent officials of both organizations could sign the Pact. Somewhat ironically, Schroeder observed, when he was Minister of the Interior his views on this subject had always been opposed by the Foreign Office. Now that he was Foreign Minister the idea still seemed acceptable to him. Perhaps the West could start by suggesting unilateral declarations. Even if such a pact were a mere formality, if the Soviets seemed to place value on it (given their penchant for formal pacts), he thought it would be good even from the NATO viewpoint to join in it. In a sense, it would have a cohesive effect on the NATO organization. Dr. Carstens said he wanted to point out that NATO as such was not a subject of international law and therefore could not itself conclude a treaty. The Secretary said at this point he wanted to give what he called his "Pufendorf lecture." As Pufendorf had said, there is no better source of international law than governments. If NATO and the Warsaw Pact organization were to enter into such an agreement then international law would grow correspondingly. The Secretary added that we have, of course, no illusions that this would give us any additional security. Schroeder commented that the Soviets have talked for more than five years about the desirability of such a pact. If it was so important to them and the recognition problem could be avoided, he did not think it was a bad idea. He noted that this and the nuclear non-diffusion point seemed to constitute two useful items. Dr. Carstens said he had finally come to the same conclusion.

Referring to the front-point paper which he had given the

Secretary, Schroeder noted that it had only been written this morning after having been discussed with his advisers on the train from Bonn yesterday. He had not studied it carefully but he thought it provided a useful reflection of German thinking.

The Secretary said that he fully agreed with two points in the German paper, one stated and one implied. We could not afford to accept disarmament measures affecting the security of the West adversely, even though they might have propaganda value. Moreover, he did not see any profit in disarmament arrangements singling out Germany and therefore discriminating against Germany. The disarmament issues at the Geneva conference were a problem between Moscow and its allies and the United States and its allies. They encompassed the globe. However, they had more to do with what happens in the European area than elsewhere, because that is where the major confrontation of force is located. It was an inescapable fact about the arms situation that Europe was the area where the arms were brought to bear on each other. Anything accomplished on disarmament therefore must affect regional arrangements. We have nothing in mind which would discriminate against Germany or lead to disengagement. However any progress in the disarmament field is bound to affect the military situation in this part of the world. Schroeder observed that Europe was already too small in relation to the Soviet land mass to constitute a meaningful zone in any sense. He referred to the 1957 London conference proposal of a 5 degrees--40 degrees zone, which the Federal Republic and France preferred to amplify as the zone covering the Atlantic to the Urals. Anything narrower than this would be insufficient. The Secretary said that the zonal concept was necessarily enlarged by the greater range of modern missiles, as the President had indicated in his recent press conference.

Schroeder referred to the Secretary's statement made to him during the Adenauer visit last fall that surely the Germans did not want the some twenty-odd Soviet divisions forever in East Germany. This was certainly true, but every discussion of the subject inevitably raised the question of the British and American divisions in the Federal Republic. These could not be equated with the Soviet divisions, since they could not be kept in Europe once they were removed from Germany, and the net result would be greatly increased European vulnerability to conventional war. The Secretary commented that the Germans were understandably nervous about the strategic situation in Europe. However, take two hypothetical cases: (a) supposing we were to say that we will keep no more than five divisions in NATO countries; if the Soviets would keep no more than five divisions in the Warsaw Pact area; if the Soviets accepted this, we would surely agree; (b) if, however, the Soviets said that they would take out ten divisions if we would take ten divisions out of NATO, this would obviously be unacceptable. The United States

is going to be adequately represented in the European defense establishment to ensure the safety of Europe; because this is both our policy and our need. If we in the West eventually find ourselves in the position where we can ensure our security with sea-borne missiles, then it would obviously be in our interest to thin out the Soviet-manned MRBM's. We cannot propose this now because we do not have the capacity, but it would be to our advantage to do something about this kind of Soviet missile deployment if we could. Schroeder commented that it would be impossible to get the Soviets to diminish the number of MRBM's on their own soil. This being the case the West needed more than just a few ships. He would prefer to know there were a few Western MRBM's on European soil. The Secretary said that some day, when he would no longer be in office, it would surely be to the advantage of Europe for the Soviets to know there were no MRBM's in Europe. In response to Schroeder's query as to how the West could have a deterrent under such conditions, the Secretary said that basically the deterrent was provided by an invulnerable weaponry. Schroeder said this might be true but people tended to believe more in the value of having something on solid ground.

Mr. Kohler said that the formulation on frontiers in the nine-point German paper was one which we could perhaps table. The Secretary observed that the frontier point was not worth much. The Soviets knew, after all, that the Oder-Neisse line was not going to be changed. Schroeder said that sound and consistent theory on reunification and an all-German peace treaty required that the final settlement of the border question be reserved until that peace treaty.

The Secretary said he had mentioned the possibility of Deputy Foreign Ministers' talking over this range of subjects for a protracted period. Did the Germans anticipate Soviet-Federal Republic talks at any stage? Schroeder said he really did not think so. He wanted to work out his ideas more precisely on talking to the Soviets generally but not specifically on Berlin. The Secretary observed that Gromyko might be very uncommunicative with him either because the Soviets were aiming at a Summit or because they wanted to try out talks with the Germans now that they recognized the Thompson-Gromyko talks had no future. Schroeder said there was no reason to believe the Soviets would do any differently with the Germans than they had in the Thompson-Gromyko talks. He would first prefer a modus vivendi on Berlin; thereafter he would be prepared to have talks with the Soviets. The Germans had to make clear that the Soviets could not have a European settlement not based on self-determination and expect to get a Federal Republic signature.

thereto. The Secretary said that the basis for any further talks with the Soviets must be their abstention from unilateral harassments of Berlin access. Dr. Carstens said that Kroll had made this point when he handed over the German memorandum. Schroeder observed that a modus-vivendi on Berlin would open the way for the Germans to discuss all outstanding issues of mutual concern. Now they were reluctant to get into talks. The pressures on poor little Germany left all alone in this situation would be very intense. Picking up Schroeder's remark the Secretary said he wondered whether the Federal Republic realized how grown up it had become. Schroeder admitted this might be true, but added that the Germans only considered themselves to have the status of sub-lessees in Berlin.

With respect to East Germany, the Secretary stated, the attractions of the Federal Republic must be overwhelming. Schroeder said this would be true if there were a Western type regime in East Germany, but there was a totalitarian regime. He knew of no case where a democracy had successfully accomplished a peaceful penetration of a totalitarian state. The Secretary cited Poland and Mr. Kohler, Yugoslavia. Schroeder said he could not except this since the developments in these countries had proceeded essentially from nationalistic causes. Mr. Kohler admitted that in Yugoslavia, at a given moment, something had happened which we did not control, but we had responded and exploited the possibilities. Our economic aid to Yugoslavia had so changed the system there that it would probably be impossible to revert back to a purely Marxist form of economy. Schroeder said that if the GDR system could be changed by economic aid, the Federal Republic would extend it. In response to the Secretary's statement that he thought there was some feeling of Germans as Germans in the GDR, just as Poles are Poles in Poland, Schroeder said the basic difference was that Germany was divided and that the intensity of bitterness between East and West Germans was intensified by this. The Secretary said he believed the East Germans would have the same desire to reestablish contacts with Western civilization that he had noted in Poland when he was still with the Rockefeller Foundation. Schroeder repeated his point about the division of Germany and how this had increased the level of bitterness. His government was obviously interested in doing everything to make the East Germans feel a common bond as Germans. Mr. Kohler remarked that, in this context, the establishment of technical commissions could be useful.